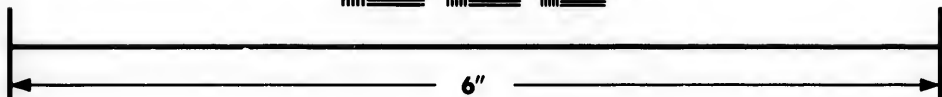
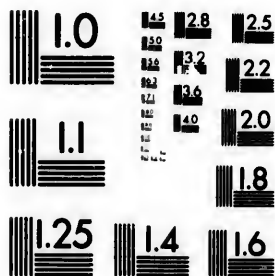


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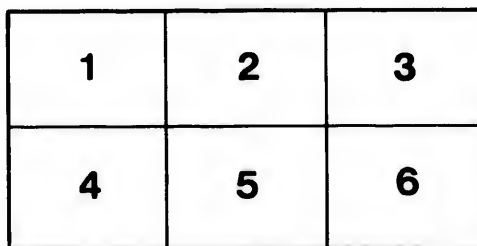
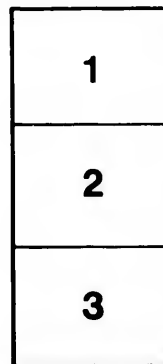
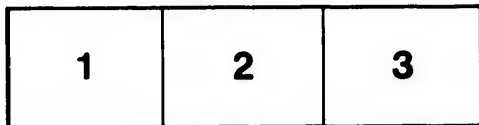
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THE SCRIPTURAL AND HISTORICAL  
CHARACTER

OF

INFANT BAPTISM

ASSERTED AND DEFENDED.

*A Lecture delivered before the Theological Union of the London  
Conference, met in Chatham, June, 1890.*

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM McDONAGH

AND PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

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INFANT BAPTISM.



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THE SCRIPTURAL AND HISTORICAL  
CHARACTER OF INFANT BAPTISM  
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**T**HE discussion of such themes as the one appointed for investigation is sometimes greatly deprecated by certain classes of Christian people, as they imagine, they are so far aside from the essential doctrines of the Gospel, that it makes very little difference what good people believe in relation to all such ceremonials. Such wise and pious Christians, we suppose, would even have dared to inquire of the Lord Jesus Himself, "Where is the use of appointing these ceremonies, anyway? This is especially true in regard to the questions of the mode and subjects of baptism. On the other hand, there is great danger in some quarters, from priestly assumption, of making more of these ceremonials than God has taught His people, or His command of observance implies. In the estimation of such Romanizers of truth as these, any people who come not up to their high ritualistic notions of the efficacy of the sacra-

ments, and proper modes of administering them, must be denied the right of being esteemed true followers of Christ, the Divine Master, and the privileges of His Church.

The teachings of Scripture in relation to infant privileges in the Church of God are, we conceive, so plainly set forth, that no one conversant with the Bible can possibly mistake their import, unless blinded by some pet theory, which he is determined to sustain at the expense of reason and the Word of God. Infant privileges are enjoined in Scripture with no ordinary emphasis by the Lord Jesus and His apostles. Their teachings the great mass of the Christian Church believes and accepts. While this is so, yet a certain section of professed believers deny to the infant portion of mankind those rights, and when attempts are made to win them over to truth, and the unscriptural nature of their theories are pointed out, they seem to consider themselves as persecuted or attacked. And especially is this the case if other Churches, who have and teach the truth, sustain by Scripture and reason, as well as by apostolic example, their views of the Divine Master's teachings on the subject of infant baptism. Contrast with this manifest touchiness, the conduct of Pædo-Baptists in the scriptural character of infant baptism, when attacked by brethren who differ from them, who try to sustain their theory against Scripture. They listen patiently, and find no fault when such theorists proclaim from their own platforms

their narrow views, however they may pity their mistakes. Now the rights we freely accord to others we claim for ourselves without offence, and we must be allowed to do so, without the imputation of attacking any party personally, giving the scriptural and historical reasons for belief in the doctrine of infant baptism. We trust that in doing so, our younger brethren in the ministry of the Methodist Church may not consider us as presuming too far, when we say that we hope to present to them, especially, some of the reasons for our belief in the divine and scriptural character of infant baptism. We are anxious that they should become able ministers of the Lord Jesus in the Methodist Church, to which office He has called them; able to defend from Scripture, not only her doctrines, but her sacramental usages against all theorists, by whatever name they may be known. In saying this much, we are, surely, but carrying out the object for which this Theological Union was organized, *viz.*, for the benefit of the ministry in the examination and discussion of doctrines.

The plan of our discussion of the subject, for convenience sake, will be as follows: First, we shall show that Christian parents should present their children to God in baptism, as they are members of Christ's Church by covenant right, and have been so recognized from the organization of the Church on earth. That they received the same external sign of membership as adults from the first, which sign was

circumcision and baptism by water. That objections to infant baptism brought by its opponents are unfounded and frivolous.

This method of treatment involves three heads of discourse, viz. :—

FIRST.—*Infants are, by divine authority, members of the Christian Church.*

SECOND.—*By divine command infants have, from the organization of the Church, received the same outward sign of membership as adults.*

THIRD.—*The objections brought against infant baptism are unfounded and frivolous.*

### I.

Infants are, by divine authority, members of the Christian Church. The word *church* has in the Scriptures both a general and specific meaning. The word, as a great author shows, points out sometimes a particular congregation or assembly of Christians in a certain country or place, as in 1 Cor. xiv. 23: "If, therefore, the whole Church come together in one place." So also we read of seven Churches in Asia, known each by the name of the place where they were located. It has also, as we have indicated, a general meaning, and in this sense applies to all God's people or Church on earth. As in Ephesians i. 22, read, "And gave Him to be head over all things to the Church;" also, Col. i. 24, "For His body's sake, which is the Church." And in Matt. xvi. 18, "On this rock I will build My

Church." In this sense, the Church embraces all on earth who belong to Christ. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His." Now, when we speak of infants belonging to the Church of God, we do not mean that they belong to the Church in A or in B, or in any one city, or denomination of the Church known by any particular name, but to God's universal Church, which is His body, and of which He is in all things the Head. To Christ's Church then infants belong, and should be acknowledged as such, as they were by the Lord of that Church; Himself, when He declared them to belong to the kingdom of heaven.

When we say that infants belong to the Church, we do not say by that, that they are responsible or active members of the Church; but we do mean that God has made them to compose a part of His Church on earth, and has given them the external sign of such belonging by His own direction and command. A family may be composed of adults and infants, but the infants are not responsible or active members of the household. They are not laborers or counsellors in the family, and yet they belong to it, and are members of the family while they lie helpless in the cradle as much as when they become able to labor as adults in the household. The infant in the family has the same claim to a common home, name, food and raiment, and share of the inheritance, as the adult members of the family; and is God's family on earth (His Church)



the only place where they are to be excluded, until they become adults? To contend so is anti-scriptural, and outside of all analogy and right reason.

A state is composed of adults and infants, but infants bear none of its burdens, they perform no state duties, yet they receive all advantages of government, they are numbered in its census as citizens, are protected fully by the state in life and property as are the adults. But is the Church of the living God, the kingdom of Jesus Christ, the only place where they are not to be numbered and have a name as belonging to Him until they choose to be so as adults, while our Lord, as the King of His Kingdom, claims Himself that they belong to it? Surely the contention, that they do not belong to His Church, is not from God, but must be accounted for by some other method than by Scripture or the teaching of Christ.

## II.

We are now to inquire if infants have, from the origin of the Christian Church, received by divine authority the same outward sign of membership as adults.

Our work, in order to making this division of the subject clear to your minds, is to find out when and where God's Church was organized, and by whom. That God has a Church none can deny. But when and under what circumstances was it originated is a question to be answered by God in the pages of the

Bible, and only there is it to be found. It took a visible form sometime, all will, no doubt, agree; but when was that time, and who composed its first membership are questions of the greatest importance in teaching the Scriptural doctrine of infant baptism. I need not say that the general Church of God agrees that the Bible teaches that the Church of Christ was organized in the house of Abraham. The opponents of infant baptism, feeling themselves bound to reject this doctrine, find great difficulty in fixing on, and agreeing together, as to the time and place of the organization of the Church of God. One class of writers says, that it was organized on the day of Pentecost. To this statement we answer, it is easy to make an unsupported declaration, but where is the evidence of such an organization of the Church of God? There is not one iota of proof for any such statement. There was a great revival it is true, and many joined the Church on that day. There is as much evidence that the Church existed before that day as that it existed after. We read that three thousand were *added* that day to the Church; but how could they have been *added* to that which had no previous existence, if that was when the Church of God was originated? And then again, the Lord's Supper was instituted fifty days before that date; then, according to the doctrine, that Christ's Church was organized on the day of Pentecost, how is it that our Lord instituted this sacrament of His Church fifty days before there was a Church to which it could belong?

Another class of writers tells us it came into existence with John the Baptist. Now, if this view be correct the other must be wrong, so we have a contest among these brethren themselves over their own errors, but anything is better than to allow it to be pushed any further back in time, lest we might come all the way back to Abraham. But how could the Christian Church have been originated by a man who was before the days of Christ? And if He did not originate the Church, who did in His day? There is no record of such an important movement by any one. The whole thing is as baseless as the fabric of an idiot's dream.

But, unfortunately for these bewildered brethren, we find a Church in existence before John's day, for St. Stephen, in Acts vii. 38, speaks of a Church in existence in the days of Moses, and of Christ being in that Church in that early day. "This is He that was in the Church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake to him (Moses) in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, who received the lively oracles to give unto us." Here was a Church before the days of John the Baptist, even before the days of Moses. But, say these people, the word *Church* here in the original Scripture is from a verb which means to *call out*, and may have been a carnal assembly, and not necessarily a religious body. We answer, that the word was used in both senses, for a carnal assembly and a religious assembly or congregation; and it is used in Scripture

but a very few times for other than a religious assembly or organization, but here, in this place, there can be no doubt as to the character of the assembly; for the angel who was with Moses was the Lord Himself, who could forgive sins, and whom Moses and the children of Israel worshipped. Moses and Aaron were in this Church, and Joshua and Caleb were in it; for there they had religious assemblies and worshipped God, consecrating themselves to His service, promising to obey Him, and receiving from Him the lively oracles. Does St. Stephen, then, by the Spirit, make a mistake in calling their organization a Church?

A later opponent of infant baptism, in writing of the origin of the Church, has ventured to move it back to the days of Moses. We inquire for the proof of this statement, and we are informed that Moses gave them circumcision, and consequently an organization. We answer, "Not that circumcision was of Moses but of the Fathers." So says the Lord Jesus Christ—see Gospel of John vii. 22. If it be said, the law was given by Moses, we reply, yes, the ceremonial law was given by Moses, not the law of the Ten Commandments. But we are informed (Gal. iii. 15-19) that the law given by Moses could not disannul the covenant made by promise four hundred and thirty years before, so as to make the promise of no effect. The ceremonial law was something added to the covenant by promise, and wherefore added, we are informed, as typical until the seed (Christ) should come, who was to be the end of the

law of Moses, or the ceremonial law, for righteousness' sake. There is as much evidence of a Church in existence before Moses as after him. If there was a people separated unto God after Moses, so there was before the days of Moses, and God calls them "My people." "My son," the children of Israel, Isaac and Abraham.

It may here be inquired, had God no people until the days of Abraham? No believers before him and his family? We answer, yes. Men who had made covenant with God by sacrifice; but until Abraham's day no organized people separated to Him from the world. No Church with membership sign and seal, without which sign and seal no one could be recognized as belonging to the covenanted people. St. Paul calls Abraham the father of believers. In what sense was he the father of the faithful? He was not the first believer, but the term *faithful* was used in the primitive Church to signify in Paul's day a member of the Church. So St. Paul terms Abraham the father of such, because the first member of an organized Church of God on earth. But further reference to this word *faithful* will be found before we have concluded this paper.

Now, the history of the origination of God's Church is easily stated, as it is plainly and forcibly put by Moses in Genesis, and by St. Paul in the New Testament (see Rom. iv. and Gen. iii.), for they both teach its organization in the household of Abraham.

We read that when Abraham was seventy-five years

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old the Lord said to him, "Get thee out of thy country  
 and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house,  
 and go into a land that I will tell thee of." Abraham  
 obeyed God, and years after God appeared to him  
 again, and said, "Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield  
 and thy exceeding great reward." God then showed  
 him the boundaries of the land of promise. (See Gen.  
 xv.) Again, when Abraham was ninety years old  
 and nine, the Lord appeared to him, and commanded  
 him to walk before Him and be perfect, and changed  
 his name from Abram to Abraham, and promised  
 him that in his seed all nations should be blessed.  
 Abraham believed God's promise, and his faith in  
 God's word to him, as St. Paul puts it, was counted  
 to him for righteousness. And God said, This is  
 the sign of your faith, in My word of promise: every  
 man child among you shall be circumcised, and  
 he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among  
 you; and the uncircumcised man-child shall be cut off  
 from among his people. Then Abraham arose and  
 was circumcised, and Ishmael and Isaac his sons,  
 according to the terms of the covenant. The work  
 was done, and God had an organization in the world  
 separated from it, and infants were members of that  
 organization. Here was the origination of God's  
 Church on earth, and never was repeated by God among  
 men. But the opponents of infant baptism tell us  
 that God made two covenants with Abraham. The one  
 in the twelfth of Genesis, a spiritual covenant, and the

other in the seventeenth chapter of the same book, a temporal covenant in relation to the possession of the land of promise. We inquire, why separate the two parts of the covenant when the Bible makes no such distinction, but, on the contrary, unites them in one in the singular, and terms them My covenant? It is manifest that the separation is for the purpose of evading infant baptism as taught in the covenant. That the covenant in both passages is a covenant of grace none would or could deny, but those that had some sinister purpose to serve. How is it that the covenant of grace, as our opponents term it, in the twelfth chapter, has neither sign nor seal, but the covenant of a few acres of land, as they represent it in the seventeenth, has both a sign and seal. Their whole interpretation is an evasion, for the twelfth chapter speaks of a possession of land "that I will show thee," says God, and Abraham's seed was to possess it. The covenant is one, step by step revealed, now in the twelfth, then in the fifteenth, then fully in the seventeenth, revealing the purpose for which God had called him years before from his kindred and father's house, that he might raise up to God a separate people in the earth.

Leaving the question of the plurality of covenants for the present, let us inquire of St. Paul whether the covenant of circumcision was a spiritual agreement. Let us hear the Scripture statement. (See Rom. iv. 11.) "And he (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had,

yet being uncircumcised, a seal." Perhaps in no Scripture is the ordinance of baptism shown so clearly to be a spiritual ordinance as circumcision is shown to be in this passage. Abraham believed GOD, and He counted it to him for righteousness, and circumcision was the outward seal of that righteousness. Surely an ordinance divinely appointed to seal the righteousness of faith must be a spiritual ordinance. And then the covenant thus signed and sealed must be a spiritual covenant. But the covenant of circumcision was thus signed and sealed, says St. Paul; therefore the covenant in Genesis xvii. must have been a spiritual covenant. The organization under such a spiritual covenant, as witnessed to by St. Paul, must be a spiritual organization. Its sign was spiritual, and the compact established under it, included infants as a part of the organization, receiving the same sign and seal as adults.

To say, then, as the opponents of infant baptism say, that circumcision was a carnal ordinance—a mere business transaction—is to make the apostle Paul, in the above-quoted texts from the epistle to the Romans, talk the most egregious nonsense ever attributed to mortal man.

But the religious character of circumcision is clearly pointed out by St. Paul in another passage from Rom. ii. 25: "For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision." In this passage it



is clearly pointed out that those thus sealed in the ordinance were bound to keep the law of God, and him who broke the law his circumcision availed not. Why was this? Because circumcision was a sign of faith in God, and a seal of faith; but the violator of God's law had not the faith, therefore his having the sign availed not. In reading over such a statement as the above from the pen of the apostle Paul, it is marvellous how any one dare say that circumcision was a carnal ordinance. It can only be accounted for on the ground of bitterness and prejudice making an effort to support a theory which finds no foundation in reason or Scripture rightly interpreted.

Again, what does St. Paul say was the advantage of circumcision, and what its profit? Was it a sign and seal of temporal possessions to be given to the seed of Abraham in Canaan? Let St. Paul again declare. See Rom. iii. 1, 2: "What advantage, then, hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision? Much in every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." This passage clearly shows it to be a spiritual ordinance. Whatever temporal advantage might flow from it, that was not its chief use or design, but the separation of a people from others around, to make them the depositaries of the revealed will of God, for the blessing of the Gentile and world at large. This was the Church through which the world was to be blessed. Infants formed a part of this circumcised organization and received its outward seal.

But, again, our opponents tell us that we have nothing to do with the Jewish organization, that the Jewish Church passed away. That circumcision had nothing whatever to do with the Gospel of Christ, and if it had, they inquire why the change? All these statements are as unscriptural and baseless as the other objection which we have noticed, and are used merely to baffle inquiry. Let us look at these statements for a little.

Let us read Gal. iii. 8: "The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." That this was the true Gospel none can doubt. As St. Paul states it to be such, and offers Abraham's seed, even Christ, for the blessing of the world. And Jesus Himself declared, "Abraham saw My day (*Christ's day*), and was glad." (John viii. 56.) Believing in this coming Christ, Abraham was justified by faith and by the same Gospel method that we are justified, and the Church to which Abraham belonged was the same Gospel Church which we now have. It never was set aside in any of its constitutional principles, but we have come to it. See Isa. lx. 3: "The Gentiles shall come to Thy light, and kings to the brightness of Thy rising." See also Rom. xi. 13-24: "But I speak to you that are Gentiles. Inasmuch, then, as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I glorify my ministry; if by any means I may provoke to jealousy them that are my flesh, and

may save some of them. For if the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? And the first-fruit is holy, so is the lump; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. But if some of the branches were broken off, and thou being a wild olive wast grafted in among them, and didst become partaker with them of the root and fatness of the olive tree; glory not over the branches, but if thou gloriest it is not thou that bearest the root, but the root that beareth thee. Thou wilt say then, the branches were broken off that I might be grafted in. Well, by their unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, neither will He spare thee. . . . For if thou wast cut out of that which is by nature a wild olive tree, and wast grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree, how much more shall these which are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree."

It is not a new Church of God, but the old Abrahamic Church, and faith revived; so we that are of faith are the children still of faithful Abraham to-day and not a new organization. Let us see if the Christian Church, as it is termed, is a new organization by Jesus Christ or His apostles, or if it is so represented in the Scriptures. First, what does our Lord say on this subject? See John's Gospel, x. 16: "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must

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bring, and they shall be one fold and one shepherd." What did our Lord mean by this fold—literally an enclosure? He meant the Jewish Church, of which He and believing Jews, like Abraham, were members. Again He says, "I say unto you, many shall come from the east and the west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." The Jews, the natural seed of that organized Church of Abraham, shall be cast out for their unbelief. But if Christ destroyed the Jewish Church, how is it that He says many shall come and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God? He simply means, the doors of Abraham's Church shall be opened to the Gentiles, as Isaiah before prophesied of that same organization, see 60th chap. 3rd verse: "The Gentiles shall come to Thy light, and kings to the brightness of Thy rising" He opened the door to the Gentiles and their children, as before the fold embraced the Jew and his infant child. And our Lord declared this to be so, as He said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Again, hear the Lord Jesus on the identity of Jewish and Christian Churches. See Matt. xxi. 33-43: "There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country; and when the time of the

fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord, therefore, of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out the vineyard to other husbandmen, which shall render to him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Therefore, say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." No one can mistake the teachings of this passage unless he wilfully shuts his eyes to its meaning. The vineyard, the Lord terms the kingdom of God, to which He says infants belong, and He Himself planted it and hedged it about. "I will bless him that blesseth thee, and curse him that curseth thee." He built a tower in it for the watchmen, and let it out to the Jewish people. But they abused their privileges, and destroyed His messengers. But He did not do away with or destroy the vineyard, or change or alter it for another enclosure.

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but He took it from them, and gave the same vineyard to others (Gentiles), bringing forth his fruit in his season. Oh, no! Not a stake of it was broken and not a stone of the tower loosened. But the Jews had their children in this vineyard, and when the Gentiles came into the possession of it, was it part of the agreement that their infants should be shut out? St. Peter settles the point, for he declares the promise is for us and for our children; and St. Paul declared in regard to the privileges of this Church, "There is no difference between Jew or Greek." What can the opponent of infant church membership and infant baptism do in contradicting the plain testimony of Scripture and history in relation to the rights of children to church membership? And where are such rights abrogated, or taken away, in the Bible? There is nothing more plainly stated in the history of the Jewish Church than the infant baptism of children out of the families of proselytes into the membership of the Jewish Church. It remains for the opponents of infant baptism to show where our Lord withdrew this right and consequent sign of such privilege. In the Abrahamic Church they were members by divine right, and they were not excluded when He changed the possessors of His vineyard, and gave the vineyard to the Gentiles on the very same covenant agreement and privileges. We shall now proceed to give you what was the Jewish practice, as regards the baptism of children into the Abrahamic Church, long before

our Lord's time and that of His apostles, a practice Lord and His apostles *must have known*, and which He and they manifestly adopted as the outward sign of church membership, still in His Church, with no change of subject anywhere in Scripture.

As there never was change of Church, abrogation of church privilege or terms of membership as respects the age of the membership in Christ's Church, we now come to prove in a few words that as infants were members from the first, and the reasons of the change of outward sign of that membership. As at the first, circumcision before the coming of our Lord, but after His coming solely baptism by water, as known among the Jews and in our Lord in His day. The first thing here is to remind you, at the risk of some repetition of thought, of the spiritual character of the covenant of God with Abraham, and of the fact that circumcision was instituted as the sign of the faith which Abraham had in the covenant promise of God. In order to be brief here, out of many quotations from Scripture which we have presented above, and others we might select we shall choose one, which you will perceive cannot be gainsaid. The passage we have selected is from the prophecy of Zacharias, father of John the Baptist, at the circumcision of his infant son, in which he states the Scriptural character of the covenant and promise made by God with Abraham of a coming seed through whom all the world should be blessed, circum-

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cision being the sign of the faith which Abraham had  
in the truthfulness of the promise, yet being uncircum-  
cised. And what did Zacharias say? Did he say God  
hath visited His people and withdrew the promise and  
its terms of covenant engagement in order to set up  
another organization or fold out of which infants shall  
be excluded? Not so! But he prophesied, saying,  
"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath  
visited His people, and raised up an horn of salvation  
for us in the house of His servant David; to perform  
the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember  
His holy covenant; the oath which He sware to our  
father Abraham, that He would grant that we being  
delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve  
Him in righteousness and holiness all the days of our  
life." Here was the estimate this good man formed of  
the covenant made with Abraham, the outward sign of  
which was circumcision, and which sign he had given  
to his infant son. St. Paul was circumcised, as also was  
Christ in infancy, as the outward sign of belonging to  
that spiritual Church of Abraham.

That circumcision was administered to infants under  
the Abrahamic covenant, the opponents of infant  
baptism will admit, but they say it was done away  
in Christ. This at once we admit, but we ask,  
"Why?" Did the fold pass away to which it was the  
entering sign? Oh, no! Well then, why did circum-  
cision pass away, and was anything instituted in its  
place?



The change in this ordinance arose from the character and terms of the covenant of which it was a sign. Abraham and the infants of the Church in the Old Testament received circumcision as a sign of faith in the promise of a coming Christ. To receive circumcision then, after Christ, the promised seed, had come, would be to reject Him and look forward for another, so says St. Paul, Gal. v. 2: "Behold I, Paul, say unto you, that if you be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing. Why? Because you thereby reject Him and look for another one to come. Here these two ordinances, circumcision and baptism by water differ. Let us trace out in what way they agree as well as differ.

1. They are, or were, the initiatory rite of entrance to the Church.

2. Each is a sign of a clean heart. "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly—in the flesh—but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the flesh, whose praise is not of men but of God." (Rom. ii. 28, 29.) Here circumcision represents the work of the Spirit in the heart. So baptism is also a sign of purity. "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins."

3. Circumcision was a sign of faith—see Rom. x. 1. Abraham received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet he was being uncircumcised. Baptism is a sign of faith in the adult, but, like circumcision, faith is not required for the child.

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4. Circumcision was a sign of peculiar relation to God—see Deuteronomy x. 15, 16: "Only the Lord had delight in thy fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them, even you above all people as it is this day, therefore circuncise the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked." Baptism is the initiatory rite of the Church, and therefore marks a line of separation between the world and Christ's kingdom. Infants were circumcised before Christ came, and also water baptism was used. He instituted water baptism in place of circumcision, directly including children in the command—see Matt. xxviii. 19, 20: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

#### BAPTISMS AMONG THE JEWS.

Christian baptism claims no higher antiquity than the time of Christ Himself, but baptism itself has a much earlier origin and higher antiquity. It need not be traced back so much by the use of the word baptize or baptism, as by the thing itself. There is no account of any surprise manifested by the people when John the Baptist used water baptism as the initiatory rite into repentance and faith in the immediate appearance of the Messiah. This fact shows plainly that the Jewish people were acquainted with such baptisms long before. It is an unquestionable fact that the Jews

baptized proselytes from heathen nations as an initiatory rite into the Jewish Church long before our Lord's day. The only question is as to when the practice began. That the Jews ever borrowed the practice from Christians cannot for a moment be maintained. Jewish tradition itself declares that baptism, as a rite, was handed down among them from the time of the Babylonian captivity, but more likely it was known in the days of Solomon, for he employed, we are told, about one hundred and fifty thousand proselytes in the building of the Temple. If proselytes to Judaism were made at that early date, have we not good reason to believe that baptism of these proselytes was practised, and may be placed as early in the history of Jewish ritual. There is a tradition among the Jews that the origin of baptism was previous to the time of Moses, and that he adopted it into the Jewish ritual. Though we find no absolute proof of this as a fact, yet there is no good reason to be found to the contrary. It is not improbable that baptism may be as old as sacrifice, and as such may have been instituted by God, as afterward it was incorporated by Christ, into Christianity.

That it was the custom of the Jews to baptize all converts to their religion from heathen people is beyond all doubt, as they themselves declare. This baptizing of them was, as St. Paul puts it, "the baptizing them into Moses." This custom of the Jews is fully shown by Wall, in his history of "Infant

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Baptism." (See Vol. I.) He quotes from Maimonides, in his work entitled "Isuri Bia," chaps. xiii. and xiv: "While an ethnic is willing to enter into the covenant, and gather himself under the wings of the Majesty of God, and take upon him the yoke of the law, he must be baptized and bring a sacrifice. This was termed baptism for proselytes, and never repeated on the same person, differing in this respect from baptism for uncleanness.

But such proselyte when he came over to the Jewish Church, if he had children then born unto him, they also were admitted as proselytes at the father's desire, and were also baptized. The child's inability to promise for himself was not looked upon as any bar to his reception and baptism; and if a female, was baptized as the male child.

The "Gemara" makes this statement, and the Misna itself, older than John the Baptist, and long before the days of our Lord, tells of the child becoming a proselyte by baptism. The "Jerusalem Misna" says that if a girl becomes a proselyte from heathen parents after she is three years old and a day, she shall not have certain privileges mentioned, but if she be a baptized proselyte before that age she shall have those privileges. Concerning the age of the child they had this rule: "Any child of such a proselyte, that was under the age of thirteen years and a day, and females that were under twelve years and a day, they were baptized as infants at the request, or by the assent, of

the father, or the authority of the court. If t  
found a child forsaken by father and mother, the ch  
was baptized in the name of a freeman or servant  
the case might be, and the position of the person  
whose name he was baptized became his posit  
through life. So then, from the most certain sta  
ments and facts of history, the baptism of infants v  
a ceremony practised among the Jews, as well kno  
by our Lord, in the Jewish Church as in the Christi  
Church. If our Lord disapproved of it, why did  
not prohibit the usage, or why did not His apost  
do so? On the contrary, they established it  
practice and precept. Now, no one can deny that th  
great historical fact of the baptism of children an  
adults as proselytes throws great light on the questio  
of infant baptism, and helps the candid reader  
understand more perfectly the commission of ou  
Saviour to His apostles, being Jews, contained in Ma  
xxviii. 19, 20. And now, at this hour, if any islan  
or country of heathens be discovered, and a missionar  
be sent according to the terms of our Lord's commi  
sion from any Pædo-Baptist Church, he would be just  
fied, without prohibition, to baptize both adults an  
infants in the name of the Father, Son and Ho  
Ghost. And he, the missionary, would understan  
from the history of the time of Christ what w  
meant for him to do, without asking a question as  
who were the rightful subjects of baptism mention  
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apostles understood and practised it accordingly. Since  
 the nations were to be proselyted to the faith of  
 Christ, how could those apostles, brought up in a  
 Church in which infant baptism of proselytes was the  
 custom, without express teaching from the Lord Him-  
 self, alter anything of the meaning from the custom-  
 ary usage and phrase in receiving proselytes from the  
 nations? To disciple the nations to Christ is the very  
 same thing in name as to proselyte them to Him; and  
 Justin Martyr calls the infants by the name of "young  
 proselytes or disciples." If our Saviour, again we  
 say, intended that the apostles should have departed  
 from the Jewish custom and not baptize infants, He  
 would surely have so directed. And if He intended  
 the change, why did He not say so?

Our brethren, who have so far departed from the  
 teachings of Christ in this matter, depend greatly on  
 this as an unerring rule, *viz.*, that since Our Lord did  
 not in this commission (recorded in Matt. xxviii. 19,  
 20), mention children as subjects of baptism, the silence  
 teaches they are not to be baptized. The direct con-  
 trary is its teaching. His silence, guided as we are  
 by the facts of the procedure of the Jewish Church,  
 proclaims aloud that children and infants are to be  
 baptized most certainly.

Now, suppose our Saviour had said, "Go and dis-  
 ciple all nations, circumcising them in the name of  
 the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, do you think our  
 theorizing brethren would not at once have taken it

for granted that infants were included from the  
alone that it was the custom, although the commiss  
was silent on the subject? But the apostles knew  
was the custom among them in the case of baptism  
in that of circumcision, and therefore practised w  
their orders demanded. Our Saviour most eviden  
took baptism as He found it in the Jewish Chur  
which was His own Church, and raised it to a hig  
use, but made no alteration as to the age of the subj  
of the rite. In the unanswerable words of St. Ambro  
we say, "If baptism and the baptizing of infants h  
been a new thing and unheard of till John the Bapt  
came, as circumcision was till God appointed it  
Abraham, there would have been, no doubt, an expre  
command for baptizing infants, as there was for circu  
cising then. But when the infants were baptiz  
commonly among the people, as appears by incont  
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such persons alone were to be baptized as to their a  
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the Gospel began that men, women and children we  
baptized as it was well known that the sun shone  
the heavens." So the case stood as to baptism wh  
Christ came, and Christ ordered it, says Dr. Lightfo  
to be a sacrament in His Church by which all shou  
be admitted into the profession of the Gospel as th  
were found proselyted to Christ as in the proselyti  
of the Jewish Church.

THE WORD "FAITHFUL" AS AN APPELLATION FOR  
CHURCH MEMBER APPLIED TO CHILDREN.

We promised again to refer to the word "Faithful" as an application of Church members as applied to children. Taylor, the learned editor of Calmet's Dictionary, declares that the word "FAITHFUL" as an appellative was extensively and permanently used for many centuries in the Primitive Christian Church for Church membership. The word was used in Scripture for the same purpose. It is applied to Timothy, to Tychicus, to Onesimus, to Silvanus, and others. (1 Cor. x. 17; Eph. iv. 21; Col. iv. 9; 1 Peter v. 12.) The mother of Timothy is termed a "FAITHFUL" (Acts xvi. 1) Pistes. "What concord hath Christ with Belial? What part hath a FAITHFUL with a non-FAITHFUL?" (2 Cor. vi. 15.) "If any faithful man or faithful woman have widows, let them relieve them that the Church be not charged:" (1 Tim. v. 16.) It is applied also in the plural to those who came with Peter. (Acts x. 45; also in 1 Tim. iv. 12; and 2 Tim. ii. 12.) In Rev. xvii. 14: "They that are with Him are called, and chosen, and FAITHFUL." In Col. i. 2: A notable instance is that of Lydia calling herself a FAITHFUL. To call a man a FAITHFUL was equivalent to a Christian brother, or member of the Church, or disciple of Christ, and was applied to baptized children. So the Apostle Paul, writing to Titus (i. 6), says a bishop must be the husband of one wife, having children who are FAITHFULS. The sense given to Rom.



xvi. 3, 5, by Chrysostom, Theodoret and Theophylact is that literally their children were all FAITHFUL. The following inscriptions will illustrate the opinion of the first Christians on this matter : Posthumus a believer who lived six years, that is, one who was recognized by baptism as a Church member ; Cyria a FAITHFUL, died eight days less than three years. Eustafia, the mother, places this in commemoration of her son, Polichronia, a FAITHFUL, who lived three years ; Urcia Florentina, a FAITHFUL, she lived three years eight months and eight days.

One inscription will prove that the term FAITHFUL was continued and applied to children for many centuries. "Here lies Maria, daughter of John, who was born in the town of Nicerata, she lived three years three months and a half a FAITHFUL. She died the fourth day of the month Xanthicus, under the consulate of the Emperor Princess Honorius II. and Constantius II."

Eusebius says there are three descriptions of members in the Church : "One who guides and two who are guided." "The people of the Church are divided into FAITHFULS who are baptized, and those who are unbaptized." Here we have the plainest testimony of the church membership of baptized children in the Primitive Christian Church. Nothing but ignorance of history of Christian usages or, worse still, a determined perversion, for a purpose, of church history and Scripture teaching, can account for the statements made by theorizing brethren that baby sprinkling, they term it, is an invention of Popery.

## TESTIMONY OF CHRISTIAN FATHERS.

Justin Martyr, forty years after the apostles' times, in his apology for the Christians addressed to the Roman emperor, says, "There are several persons among us of sixty and seventy years old, of both sexes, who were discipled or made disciples to Christ in or from childhood which do continue uncorrupted." We all may see here that Justin understands the words of our Lord in Matt. xviii. 19, 20, as applicable to infants. But more of this again in another place.

Ireneus, born A.D. 97, writing about sixty years after the apostles (see Book 2nd, chap. 39), says: "Therefore as He (Christ) was Master, He had also the age of a master—sanctifying every several age by the likeness of what it was to Him, for He came to save the persons by Himself. All, I mean, who by Him are baptized into God—infants, and little ones, and children, and youths, and elder persons. For infants being made and thus sanctified are made holy." This testimony is full and plain on this subject of infant baptism. Now, Ireneus, according to Mr. Dodwell, was born four years before the death of St. John, so his testimony as to the practice of infant baptism reaches back to the apostles' day.

Clement of Alexandria, living about ninety years after the apostles, advises Christians what emblems are to be used in infant baptism, as did the apostles of our Lord. (See Wall's "Hist. of Infant Baptism," Vol. I., chap. 3, fourth ed.)

Tertullian, who lived one hundred years after the apostles of our Lord, leaves his testimony that infants were baptized in his day and before his time.

Origen, who lived and wrote in the first part of the second century, declares that, because of original sin infants were baptized in his time, thus proving that infant baptism had come down from the days of the apostles. In a commentary of his on the eighteenth chapter of Matthew and tenth verse, he inquires whether the angels may be supposed to take charge of infants at their baptism or before? thus showing that infant baptism was commonly practised in the Church of Christ in his day.

St. Cyprian lived one hundred and fifty years after the apostles of our Lord. At the time of the Council of Carthage, in the year 253, there were sixty-six bishops present, and one Fidus, a country bishop, sent a question to be decided by the assembly, *viz.*, whether an infant might be baptized before being eight days old? He was answered by the Council, it was not for them to hinder it to be baptized, inasmuch as this rule was to be observed to infants and persons newly born. (See Wall's Hist., London ed.)

"If we look back from this time to the space that had passed from the apostles' day, which was 150 years, we must conclude that it was easy then to know the practice of the apostles and first Christians in their days, for some of those sixty-six bishops must be at this time seventy years of age, or perhaps eighty years

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old, which would reach back over more than half the space of time since the apostles' day, and at the time when they were infants there must have been several men who were born within the apostles' age who were then alive and able to transmit the knowledge of the usages of the Christian Church down to the age of Cyprian."

We need not pursue this inquiry further in this direction, as fathers, councils and members of the Primitive Church nearly all unite their testimony as to the practice of infant baptism in the apostolic and subsequent ages of the Christian Church.

We shall now examine some of the principal objections raised by our theorizing brethren.

#### UNFOUNDED AND FRIVOLOUS OBJECTIONS.

OBJECTION FIRST.—"It is urged against infant baptism that the Bible requires faith in order to baptism, but as infants are unable to believe or exercise faith, they are therefore not to be baptized." (See Thorn on "Infant Baptism.")

This objection, at first look, seems to be fair and unanswerable. The authority for making faith the condition of baptism is taken from our Lord's commission to the apostles, in Mark xvi. 15, 16, and runs thus: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." But the baptism here is the Christian baptism proper,

not the symbolic baptism by water. In this passage the baptism is one that saves, and is conferred on believing and conveys salvation. It cannot be water baptism. See Eph. iv. 5: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." The baptism of the Holy Ghost which saves on believing, and which water never does.

This, the opponents of infant baptism say, places *faith* before baptism, and hence excludes infants. But this is not a lawful inference, for first, the commission is in general terms, merely authorizing the preaching of the Gospel to all creatures, and there is no specification of individuals. Secondly, the preaching of the Gospel is to adults or grown-up persons, *and by faith they are saved*; and it is evident to any thoughtful mind that the discharge of such specific duty by the preacher has no bearing whatever on the privilege or condition of infants, nor is there here a command to baptize adults in any form. But, again, the argument proves too much, for as St. Paul declares that Abraham received circumcision as a seal of his *faith* in the preached Gospel when he was ninety years old and nine, by this argument the child of Abraham as an infant was no more capable than the child of the Gentile of exercising faith in the promised *seed*, and would by the above argument be excluded from circumcision. What a pity the objector had not been present when God commanded Abraham to circumcise at eight days old, that he might have put in his objection and instructed the Lord that, as infants were incapable of

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believing, by the terms of the covenant, infants were excluded from receiving the sign of faith. The objection is frivolous and impertinent, because it assumes to teach the God of Israel what was the proper course to pursue in the case of infants.

OBJECTION SECOND.—“It is objected that infant baptism is opposed to the spiritual nature of Christ’s kingdom.” Then it must have been so with circumcision, for it was administered under the Abrahamic covenant, and if St. Paul declares, as he does, that it was symbolic of spiritual blessings in the heart,” circumcision is of the heart and not of the letter,” but infants were circumcised in the letter, was it then, by the authority of God opposed to His spiritual reign and kingdom? Again we assert that such a cavilling objection is not only absurd and frivolous, but also unscriptural.

OBJECTION THIRD.—“In infant baptism the free agency of the child is taken away, and he is left no choice in the matter of baptism or religion.”

We have only to put one or two inquiries to prove the baselessness of such an objection. When the Israelites were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, was their freedom of choice consulted; and by circumcising an infant of eight days old, was its freedom interfered with? Is man entitled to the choice of what religion he shall profess, if any, and whether he shall be baptized or not? We submit that no man, whether child or adult, has the right to

say what religion he shall profess, or whether he shall choose to be baptized. God alone has that right to say, and He has said it, and in such an objection the claim of the objector is nothing short of rebellion against the authority of God.

OBJECTION FOURTH.—“Infants have not the knowledge essential to baptism and, therefore, are not subjects for baptism.”

The import of this objection is that children should not be baptized unless they can comprehend the nature and purport of the religious act.

Now we shall see the absurdity of such an objection from what is of daily occurrence among men, and which reasonable men do not object. Young infants are placed under obligations personally and are bound by covenants and are blest by promises of which they at the time, were entirely ignorant, and with which they at the time never expressed their concurrence. Though ever so young, they are members of the commonwealth of which they have no knowledge, and yet while the opponents of infant baptism acknowledge all this to be right and proper, and act on it every day in property regulations, yet in religious matters will dare to declare that to place children under obligation until they are capable of understanding, is absurd and foolish. But let us see how this objection will apply in the matter of circumcision. How did the Hebrew infant arrive at the knowledge of what circumcision implied in order to become fit for that ordinance?

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plied faith in a coming Christ, says St. Paul. Did they attain this knowledge before they were circumcised, or was such knowledge essential, and where is such doctrine taught? Nowhere. But as in Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, baptism was to come first and teaching afterwards: "Go ye and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the *Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." And in the case of the Jewish child, first came circumcision and then the teaching. See Deut. iv. 9: "But teach them to thy sons and to thy sons' sons." Thus you may see this objection, as all the other objections to infant baptism, insults God, as finding His administration faulty, and is both frivolous and without foundation in reason.

OBJECTION FIFTH.—"Infant baptism is a childish ceremony." Not any more childish than for an adult to walk up to his or her neck in water and then some person bend over and dip the rest of them, and then pretend that is immersing them. Not any more than circumcising a babe. Why do not our friends find fault with God, and term such conduct cruel? But are not infants equally important with men and more innocent, and their consecration to God as momentous an affair as that of prince or sage? What childish work it was for God, as He did, to baptize by sprinkling all the children of the Israelites in the cloud and in the sea. Opponents of infant baptism are always



insulting both God and men by such an objection as the above ; both the Lord of circumcision, and their fellow Christians, to say the least, have as earnest a desire to do the right and follow Christ as they have.

**OBJECTION SIXTH.**—" But children may have all the advantages of religious instruction without baptism as well as with it."

So also might this have been the case with the young proselytes and Israelites in the wilderness and in Canaan. But God in His infinite wisdom and love circumcised them first and baptized them, too, in the cloud and in the sea before giving them the advantages of religious instruction. Besides, the baptism of a real Christian adult confers not a single benefit or privilege which millions do not as fully enjoy without being immersed. And in the Scripture it is nowhere to be found that the apostles of our Lord were ever baptized before or after partaking of the Lord's Supper at or in the upper room with their Lord and Master. So much for the great force of the above objection ; like all the others, it has no solid ground on which it can be urged.

**OBJECTION SEVENTH.**—" Christian baptism is a New Testament rite, but you argue as though it was an Old Testament institution."

We inquire, who gave those separating names to the Scriptures, and what right have you to talk of Christian baptism ? Is such a term found in the Bible ? Preaching, praise and prayer are duties performed by all devout disciples of Christ, are they, therefore, what

you take upon yourself to term New Testament duties ? Who imagines such a distinction taught in the Bible as a New Testament Church, with New Testament baptisms, and New Testament Church membership ? The Scriptures are one with ever-increasing doctrinal clearness of revelation, and what God Himself personally instituted of rite or ordinance never has been abrogated ; it may have been substituted or changed but never abolished. Infants were circumcised under the authority of God at first as members of His Church and in His kingdom, and when He came among men as the Christ He declared them members still ; and for the sufficient reasons given above, He Himself changed the rite from circumcision to baptism by water, still retaining the teachings of Scripture as to the subjects of baptism. So much for the objection that Christian baptism is a New Testament rite, and not an old Testament institution. Like all the other objections, it has no foundation in fact or authority to rest upon, and is both frivolous and perverting.

**OBJECTION EIGHTH.**—There is no explicit command in Scripture, or clearly recorded instance of infant baptism in the New Testament.”

This is the last objection from the opponents of infant baptism we shall notice in this paper, as it is already too lengthy. It is not clearly or expressly stated in the Word of God that a single infant was baptized in the Red Sea, or ate manna in the wilderness ; nor is there any statement that a child

passed through the Red Sea, or a mother either. But unquestionably women passed over, and children, too, for all that, and were all baptized in the cloud and in the sea. They are included in the phrase used by the apostle, "Our fathers." We never read that the apostles baptized young men or young women, or women at all. Are we then to affirm that such persons were never baptized, because they are not specifically mentioned? Where is there any account of the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, Lazarus, or his sisters, the twelve apostles, and numbers more of note on the sacred page, ever being baptized, and yet we dare not say they never were baptized because they were not specifically mentioned? There is not one text of Scripture to be found in the Bible to teach that none but the children of believing parents are only to be baptized. Neither is there one text of Scripture to be found, and we challenge the opponents of infant baptism to find one text, to say that children of believing parents are not to be baptized, until they become adults and choose for themselves. There is not in Scripture one single instance of the baptism for which they plead in the cases mentioned. As to the cases of adult converts to Christianity being baptized we all agree, but that there is any authority in Scripture for saying that the children of such must remain unbaptized until they grow up to be men and women there is no Scripture authority, but the contrary. Let us examine this point. At the risk of having it said

we have repeated ourselves, we answer the above objection by fairly and flatly stating, without fear of successful contradiction, that Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, is an explicit command to baptize children, and all the perverting logic used by our opponents cannot do away with its positive teaching. The command is to "disciple all nations;" yes, say our opponents, by preaching the Gospel to them. Are none others of these nations then to be disciplined but those who are capable of understandingly hearing the Gospel, repenting and believing? This doctrine cannot be true, for the larger part of the nations are children and infants, and such an exposition destroys the command it pretends to expound. "All nations" is equivalent to the human race. Now, there never was a nation the vastest numbers of which were not incapable of being thus disciplined. That preaching and teaching are not all the methods for discipling is most clearly put by the text, as it states baptizing them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Any other sentiment or exposition eliminates the infant children of the human race from a discipleship in Christianity, which is a monstrous heresy, dissolving all claims to a common redemption, and from the divine unity between parents and children, under which the human race exists, and is, on its face, absurd. The command, then, to disciple all nations embraces the children of the race in a common baptism, and does not subvert, as the doctrine of our opponents does, the economy

under which all nations exist, beside falsely stating there is no explicit command to baptize all nations, then teaching them to observe what the Gospel commands; so much for the absurd statement and objection, "there is no explicit command in Scripture to baptize infants." It is equally baseless with all the other statements made in order to support a theory alike contrary to Scripture and reason.

We have done for the present, and invite your careful attention to the teachings of the Word of God on the subject here discussed, and be not influenced or led away by theories of men into heresy and untruth from the principles and privileges of the Gospel. But as Methodists hold fast the form of sound words delivered you from the Scriptures of truth. Such theories as those of the opponents of infant baptism are Popish in their influence, so far as being a new invention fastened on the Church of Christ, and beget a Popish spirit of exclusiveness among the membership of Christ's Church.

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